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ECHOES OF INFANT VOICES.

a



E C H O E S

OF

INFANT VOICES.



"When the wind blows, the blossoms fall;
But a good God reigns over all."

"O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away."

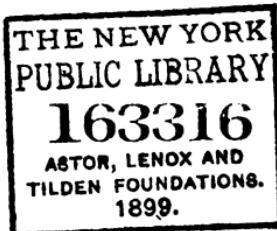


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1849.

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TO

THE BEREAVED AND SORROWING PARENT,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

If it shall serve to soften the shadows of sad hours, by awakening the echoes of pleasant voices that have passed away from earth, or brighten the faith of the stricken and wounded heart, it will have accomplished its mission,— fulfilled its purpose.

M. A. H.

1849.



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THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

THERE is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

“ Shall I have naught that is fair ? ” saith he,—
“ Have naught but the bearded grain ?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves ;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“ My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled ;
“ Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

“ They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love ;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day ;
’T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

J. G. W.

EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.



WITHIN her downy cradle there lay a little child,
And a group of hovering angels unseen upon her
smiled.

A strife arose among them, a loving, holy strife,
Which should shed the richest blessing over the
new-born life.

One breathed upon her features, and the babe in
beauty grew,

With a cheek like morning's blushes, and an eye
of azure hue ;

Till every one who saw her was thankful for the
sight

Of a face so sweet and radiant with ever fresh
delight.

Another gave her accents, and a voice as musical

As a spring-bird's joyous carol, or a rippling streamlet's fall ;

Till all who heard her laughing, or her words of childish grace,

Loved as much to listen to her, as to look upon her face.

Another brought from heaven a clear and gentle mind,

And within the lovely casket the precious gem enshrined ;

Till all who knew her wondered that God should be so good

As to bless with such a spirit our desert world and rude.

Thus did she grow in beauty, in melody, and truth,

The budding of her childhood just opening into youth,

And to our hearts yet dearer every moment than
before

She became, though we thought fondly heart
could not love her more.

Then outspake another angel, nobler, brighter than
the rest,

As with strong arm, but tender, he caught her to
his breast :—

“ Ye have made her all too lovely for a child of
mortal race,

But no shade of human sorrow shall darken o'er
her face :

“ Ye have tuned to gladness only the accents of
her tongue,

And no wail of human anguish shall from her lips
be wrung ;

Nor shall the soul that shineth so purely from
within

Her form of earth-born frailty e'er know the
taint of sin :

“Lulled in my faithful bosom, I will bear her far
away,
Where there is nor sin, nor anguish, nor sorrow,
nor decay :
And mine a boon more glorious than all the gifts
shall be, —
Lo ! I crown her happy spirit with immortality.”

Then on his heart our darling yielded up her
gentle breath,
For the stronger, brighter angel, who loved her
best, was Death.

MY CHILD.



I CANNOT make him dead !
His fair, sunshiny head,
Is ever bounding round my study chair ;
Yet when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes, — he is not there !

I walk my parlour floor,
And through the open door
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair ;
I 'm stepping towards the hall
To give the boy a call ;
And then bethink me that — he is not there !

I thread the crowded street :
A satchelled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes, and colored hair ;
And as he 's running by,
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that — he is not there !

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin-lid ;
Closed are his eyes ; cold is his forehead ;
My hand that marble felt ;
O'er it in prayer I knelt ;
Yet my heart whispers that — he is not there !

I cannot *make* him dead !
When passing by the bed,
So long watched over with parental care,
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that — he is not there !

When, at the cool, gray break
Of day, from sleep I wake,
With my first breathing of the morning air

My soul goes up with joy
To Him who gave my boy,
Then comes the sad thought that—he is not there !

When, at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I 'm with his mother, offering up our prayer,
Whate'er I may be *saying*,
I am, in spirit, praying
For our boy's spirit, though—he is not there !

Not there !—where, then, is he ?
The form I used to see
Was but the *raiment* that he used to wear ;
The grave, that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked ;—he is not there !

He lives !—in all the past
He lives ; nor, to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair ;
In dreams I see him now ;
And on his angel brow
I see it written, “Thou shalt see me *there* !”

Yes, we all live to God !

Father, thy chastening rod

So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,

That, in the spirit land,

Meeting at thy right hand,

'T will be our heaven to find that — he is *there* !

THE MORNING-GLORY.



WE wreathed about our darling's head the morning-glory bright ;
Her little face looked out beneath, so full of life and light,
So lit as with a sunrise, that we could only say,
She is the morning-glory true, and her poor types are they.

So always, from that happy time, we call her by their name ;
And very fitting it did seem, for, sure as morning came,
Behind her cradle-bars she smiled to catch the first faint ray,
As from the trellis smiles the flower and opens to the day.

But not so beautiful they rear their airy cups of blue,
As turned her sweet eyes to the light, brimmed with sleep's tender dew ;
And not so close their tendrils fine round their supports are thrown,
As those dear arms, whose outstretched plea clasped all hearts to her own.

We used to think how she had come, even as comes the flower,
The last and perfect added gift to crown love's morning hour,
And how in her was imaged forth the love we could not say,
As on the little dew-drops round shines back the heart of day.

We never could have thought, O God, that she must wither up,
Almost before a day was flown, like the morning-glory's cup ;

We never thought to see her droop her fair and
noble head,
Till she lay stretched before our eyes, wilted, and
cold, and dead.

The morning-glory's blossoming will soon be
coming round,
We see their rows of heart-shaped leaves up-
springing from the ground ;
The tender things the winter killed renew again
their birth,
But the glory of our morning has passed away
from earth.

O Earth, in vain our aching eyes stretch over
thy green plain !
Too harsh thy dews, too gross thine air, her spirit
to sustain ;
But up in groves of Paradise full surely we shall
see
Our morning-glory beautiful twine round our dear
Lord's knee.

TO WILLIAM.



It seems but yesterday, my love, thy little heart
beat high ;

And I had almost scorned the voice that told me
thou must die.

I saw thee move with active bound, with spirits
wild and free,

And infant grace and beauty gave their glorious
charm to thee.

Far on the sunny plains I saw thy sparkling foot-
steps fly,

Firm, light, and graceful as the bird that cleaves
the morning sky ;

And often as the playful breeze waved back thy
shining hair,
Thy cheek displayed the red-rose tint that health
had painted there.

And then, in all my thoughtfulness, I could not
but rejoice

To hear upon the morning wind the music of thy
voice, —

Now echoing in the rapturous laugh, now sad
almost to tears ; .

'T was like the sounds I used to hear in old and
happier years !

Thanks for that memory to thee, my little, lovely
boy, —

That memory of my youthful bliss, which time
would fain destroy.

I listened, as the mariner suspends the out-bound
oar,

To taste the farewell gale that breathes from off
his native shore.

So gentle in thy loveliness, alas ! how could
it be

That Death would not forbear to lay his icy hand
on thee,

Nor spare thee yet a little while, in childhood's
opening bloom,

While many a sad and weary soul was longing for
the tomb ?

Was mine a happiness too pure for erring man to
know ?

Or why did Heaven so soon destroy my paradise
below ?

Enchanting as the vision was, it sank away as
soon

As when, in quick and cold eclipse, the sun
grows dark at noon.

loved thee, and my heart was blest ; but ere
that day was spent,

I saw thy light and graceful form in drooping illness
bent,

And shuddered as I cast a look upon thy fainting
head ;

The mournful cloud was gathering there, and life
was almost fled.

Days passed ; and soon the seal of death made
known that hope was vain ;

I knew the swiftly wasting lamp would never burn
again ;

The cheek was pale ; the snowy lips were gently
thrown apart ;

And life in every passing breath seemed gushing
from the heart.

I knew those marble lips to mine should never
more be pressed,

And floods of feeling, undefined, rolled wildly
o'er my breast ;

Low, stifled sounds, and dusky forms, seemed
moving in the gloom,

As if Death's dark array were come to bear thee
to the tomb.

And when I could not keep the tear from gathering
ing in my eye,
Thy little hand pressed gently mine, in token of
reply ;
To ask one more exchange of love, thy look was
upward cast,
And in that long and burning kiss thy happy
spirit passed !

I never trusted to have lived to bid farewell to
thee,
And almost said, in agony, it ought not so to
be ;
I hoped that thou within the grave my weary
head shouldst lay,
And live, beloved, when I was gone, for many a
happy day.

With trembling hand I vainly tried thy dying eyes
to close,
And almost envied, in that hour, thy calm and
deep repose ;

For I was left in loneliness, with pain and grief
oppressed,
And thou wast with the sainted, where the weary
are at rest.

Yes ! I am sad and weary now ; but let me not
repine
Because a spirit, loved so well, is earlier blest
than mine ;
My path may darken as it will, I shall not much
deplore,
Since thou art where the ills of life can never
reach thee more.

THE FAREWELL TO THE DEAD.



COME near ! — ere yet the dust
Soil the bright paleness of the settled brow,
Look on your loved one, and embrace him now,
 In still and solemn trust !
Come near ! — once more let kindred lips be
 pressed
On his cold cheek ; then bear him to his rest !

Look yet on this young face !
What shall the beauty, from amongst us gone,
Leave of its image, e'en where most it shone,
 Gladdening its hearth and race ?
Dim grows the semblance on man's heart im-
 pressed ; —
Come near, and bear the beautiful to rest !

Ye weep, and it is well ;
For tears befit earth's partings. Yesterday
Song was upon the lips of this pale clay,
And sunshine seemed to dwell
Where'er he moved,— the welcome and the
blessed ;—
Come near, and bear ye the beloved to rest !

How may the mother's heart
Dwell on her son, and dare to hope again ?
The spring's rich promise hath been given in
vain,
The lovely must depart.
Is *he* not gone, our brightest and our best ?
Come near, and bear the early called to rest !

Look yet on him, whose eye
Meets yours no more, in sadness or in mirth !
Was he not fair amidst the sons of earth,
The beings born to die ?
But not where death has power may love be
blessed ;—
Come near, and bear the silent unto rest !

Yet mourn ye not as they
Whose spirit's light is quenched !—for him the
past
Is sealed. He may not fall, he may not cast
His birthright's hope away !
All is not *here* of our beloved and blessed ;—
Leave ye the sleeper with his God to rest !

ON THE DEATH OF A DAUGHTER.



FAREWELL, my darling child, a sad farewell !
Thou art gone from earth, in higher scenes to
dwell ;
For sure, if ever being formed from dust
Might hope for bliss, thine is that holy trust.
Spotless and pure from God thy spirit came ;
Spotless it has returned, a brighter flame.
Thy last, soft prayer was heard ; — no more to
roam,
Thou art, ('t was all thy wish,) thou art gone
home.*
Ours are the loss and agonizing grief,
The slow, dead hours, the sighs without relief,

* Her last words, uttered but a few moments before her death, were, "I want to go home."

The lingering nights, the thoughts of pleasure past,
Memory, that wounds and darkens to the last.
How desolate the space, how deep the line,
That part our hopes, our fates, our paths from thine !

We tread with faltering steps the shadowy shore ;
Thou art at rest where storms can vex no more.
When shall we meet again, and kiss away
The tears of joy in one eternal day ?
Most lovely thou, in beauty's rarest truth !
A cherub's face ; the breathing blush of youth ;
A smile more sweet than seemed to mortal
given ;
An eye that spoke, and beamed the light of
heaven ;
A temper like the balmy summer sky,
That soothes, and warms, and cheers, when life
beats high ;
A bounding spirit, which, in sportive chase,
Gave, as it moved, a fresh and varying grace ;
A voice whose music warbled notes of mirth,
In tones unearthly, or scarce formed for earth ;

A mind which kindled with each passing thought,
And gathered treasures when they least were
sought ; —

These were thy bright attractions ; these had
power

To spread a nameless charm o'er every hour.
But that which more than all could bliss impart
Was thy warm love, thy tender, buoyant heart,
Thy ceaseless flow of feeling, like the rill,
That fills its sunny banks, and deepens still ;
Thy chief delight to fix thy parents' gaze,
Win their fond kiss, or gain their modest praise.

When sickness came, though short, and hurried
o'er,

It made thee more an angel than before.
How patient, tender, gentle, though disease
Preyed on thy life ! — how anxious still to please !
How oft, around thy mother's neck entwined,
Thy arms were folded, as to Heaven resigned !
How oft thy kisses on her pallid cheek
Spoke all thy love, as language ne'er could
speak !

E'en the last whisper of thy parting breath
Asked, and received, a mother's kiss in death.
But O, how vain by art or words to tell
What ne'er was told, — affection's magic spell !
More vain to tell that sorrow of the soul
That works in secret, works beyond control,
When death strikes down, with sudden crush and
power,
Parental hope, and blasts its opening flower ;
Most vain to tell how deep that long despair
Which time ne'er heals, which time can scarce
impair.

Yet still I love to linger on the strain, —
'T is grief's sad privilege. When we complain,
Our hearts are eased of burdens hard to bear ;
We mourn our loss, and feel a comfort there.
My child, my darling child, how oft with thee
Have I passed hours of blameless ecstasy !
How oft have wandered, oft have paused, to hear
Thy playful thoughts fall sweetly on my ear !
How oft have caught a hint beyond thy age,
Fit to instruct the wise, or charm the sage !

How oft, with pure delight, have turned to see
Thy beauty felt by all, except by thee ;
Thy modest kindness, and thy searching glance ;
Thy eager movements, and thy graceful dance ;
And, while I gazed with all a father's pride,
Concealed a joy worth all on earth beside !
How changed the scene ! In every favorite walk
I miss thy flying steps, thy artless talk ;
Where'er I turn, I feel thee ever near ;
Some frail memorial comes, some image dear.
Each spot still breathes of thee, — each garden-
flower
Tells of the past, in sunshine or in shower ;
And here the chair, and there the sofa stands,
Pressed by thy form, or polished by thy hands.
My home how full of thee ! But where art thou ?
Gone, like the sunbeam from the mountain's brow ;
But, unlike that, once passed the fated bourn,
Bright beam of heaven, thou never shalt return.
Yet, yet it soothes my heart on thee to dwell ;
Sweet spirit, darling child, farewell ! farewell !

THRENODY.



THE south wind brings
Life, sunshine, and desire,
And on every mount and meadow
Breathes aromatic fire ;
But over the dead he has no power,
The lost, the lost, he cannot restore ;
And, looking over the hills, I mourn
The darling who shall not return.

I see my empty house,
I see my trees repair their boughs ;
And he, the wondrous child,
Whose silver warble wild
Outvalued every pulsing sound
Within the air's cerulean round, —

The hyacinthine boy, for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom, —
The gracious boy, who did adorn
The world whereinto he was born,
And by his countenance repay
The favor of the loving day, —
Has disappeared from the day's eye ;
Far and wide she cannot find him ;
My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.
Returned this day, the south wind searches,
And finds young pines and budding birches,
But finds not the budding man ;
Nature, who lost him, cannot remake him ;
Fate let him fall, Fate can't retake him ;
Nature, Fate, Men, him seek in vain.

And whither now, my truant wise and sweet,
O, whither tend thy feet ?
I had the right, few days ago,
Thy steps to watch, thy place to know ;
How have I forfeited the right ?
Hast thou forgot me in a new delight ?

I hearken for thy household cheer,
O eloquent child !
Whose voice, an equal messenger,
Conveyed thy meaning mild.
What though the pains and joys
Whereof it spoke were toys
Fitting his age and ken,
Yet fairest dames and bearded men,
Who heard the sweet request,
So gentle, wise, and grave,
Bended with joy to his behest,
And let the world's affairs go by,
Awhile to share his cordial game,
Or mend his wicker wagon-frame, —
Still plotting how their hungry ear
That winsome voice again might hear ;
For his lips could well pronounce
Words that were persuasions.

Gentlest guardians marked serene
His early hope, his liberal mien ;
Took counsel from his guiding eyes
To make this wisdom earthly wise.

Ah ! vainly do these eyes recall
The school-march, each day's festival,
When every morn my bosom glowed
To watch the convoy on the road ;
The babe in willow wagon closed,
With rolling eyes and face composed ;
With children forward and behind,
Like Cupids studiously inclined ;
And he the chieftain paced beside,
The centre of the troop allied,
With sunny face of sweet repose,
To guard the babe from fancied foes.
The little captain innocent
Took the eye with him as he went ;
Each village senior paused to scan
And speak the lovely caravan.
From the window I look out
To mark thy beautiful parade,
Stately marching in cap and coat
To some tune by fairies played ; —
A music heard by thee alone
To works as noble led thee on.

Now Love and Pride, alas ! in vain,
Up and down their glances strain.
The painted sled stands where it stood ;
The kennel by the corded wood ;
The gathered sticks to stanch the wall
Of the snow-tower, when snow should fall ;
The ominous hole he dug in the sand,
And childhood's castles built or planned ;
His daily haunts I well discern, —
The poultry-yard, the shed, the barn, —
And every inch of garden ground
Paced by the blessed feet around,
From the roadside to the brook
Whereinto he loved to look.
Step the meek birds where erst they ranged ;
The wintry garden lies unchanged ;
The brook into the stream runs on ;
But the deep-eyed boy is gone.

On that shaded day,
Dark with more clouds than tempests are,
When thou didst yield thy innocent breath,
In birdlike heavings, unto death,

Night came, and Nature had not thee ;
I said, " We are mates in misery."
The morrow dawned with needless glow ;
Each snowbird chirped, each fowl must crow ;
Each trumper started ; but the feet
Of the most beautiful and sweet
Of human youth had left the hill
And garden, — they were bound and still.
There 's not a sparrow or a wren,
There 's not a blade of autumn grain,
Which the four seasons do not tend,
And tides of life and increase lend ;
And every chick of every bird,
And weed, and rock-moss is preferred.
O ostrich-like forgetfulness !
O loss of larger in the less !
Was there no star that could be sent,
No watcher in the firmament,
No angel from the countless host
That loiters round the crystal coast,
Could stoop to heal that only child,
Nature's sweet marvel undefiled,

And keep the blossom of the earth,
Which all her harvests were not worth ?
Not mine, — I never called thee mine,
But Nature's heir, — if I repine,
And, seeing rashly torn and moved,
Not what I made, but what I loved,
Grow early old with grief that thou
Must to the wastes of Nature go, —
'T is because a general hope
Was quenched, and all must doubt and grope.
For flattering planets seemed to say
This child should ills of ages stay,
By wondrous tongue, and guided pen,
Bring the flown Muses back to men.
Perchance not he, but Nature, ailed ;
The world, and not the infant, failed.
It was not ripe yet to sustain
A genius of so fine a strain,
Who gazed upon the sun and moon
As if he came unto his own,
And, pregnant with his grander thought,
Brought the old order into doubt.

His beauty once their beauty tried ;
They could not feed him, and he died,
And wandered backward as in scorn,
To wait an eon to be born.

Ill day which made this beauty waste,
Plight broken, this high face defaced !
Some went and came about the dead ;
And some in books of solace read ;
Some to their friends the tidings say ;
Some went to write, some went to pray ;
One tarried here, there hurried one ;
But their heart abode with none.

Covetous death bereaved us all,
To aggrandize one funeral.
The eager fate which carried thee
Took the largest part of me :
For this losing is true dying ;
This is lordly man's down-lying,
This his slow but sure reclining,
Star by star his world resigning.

O child of paradise,
Boy who made dear his father's home,

In whose deep eyes
Men read the welfare of the times to come,
I am too much bereft.
The world dishonored thou hast left.
O Truth's and Nature's costly lie !
O trusted broken prophecy !
O richest fortune sourly crossed !
Born for the future, to the future lost !

The deep Heart answered, “ Weepest thou ?
Worthier cause for passion wild,
If I had not taken the child.
And deemest thou as those who pore,
With aged eyes, short way before, —
Think'st Beauty vanished from the coast
Of matter, and thy darling lost ?
Taught he not thee, — the man of eld,
Whose eyes within his eyes beheld
Heaven's numerous hierarchy span
The mystic gulf from God to man ?
To be alone wilt thou begin
When worlds of lovers hem thee in ?

To-morrow, when the masks shall fall
That dizen Nature's carnival,
The pure shall see by their own will,
Which overflowing Love shall fill,
'T is not within the force of fate
The fate-conjoined to separate.
But thou, my votary, weepest thou ?
I gave thee sight, — where is it now ?
I taught thy heart beyond the reach
Of ritual, Bible, or of speech ;
Wrote in thy mind's transparent table,
As far as the incommunicable ;
Taught thee each private sign to raise,
Lit by the supersolar blaze.
Past utterance, and past belief,
And past the blasphemy of grief,
The mysteries of Nature's heart ;
And though no Muse can these impart,
Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,
And all is clear from east to west.

“ I came to thee as to a friend ;
Dearest, to thee I did not send

Tutors, but a joyful eye,
Innocence that matched the sky,
Lovely locks, a form of wonder,
Laughter rich as woodland thunder,
That thou mightst entertain apart
The richest flowering of all art ;
And, as the great all-loving Day
Through smallest chambers takes its way,
That thou mightst break thy daily bread
With prophet, Saviour, and head ;
That thou mightst cherish for thine own
The riches of sweet Mary's son,
Boy-Rabbi, Israel's paragon.
And thoughtest thou such guest
Would in thy hall take up his rest ?
Would rushing life forget her laws,
Fate's glowing revolution pause ?
High omens ask diviner guess ;
Not to be conned to tediousness.
And know my higher gifts unbind
The zone that girds the incarnate mind.
When the scanty shores are full
With Thought's perilous, whirling pool,

When frail Nature can no more,
Then the Spirit strikes the hour :
My servant Death, with solving rite,
Pours finite into infinite.

“ Wilt thou freeze love’s tidal flow,
Whose streams through Nature circling go ?
Nail the wild star to its track
On the half-climbed zodiac ?
Light is light which radiates,
Blood is blood which circulates,
Life is life which generates,
And many-seeming life is one, —
Wilt thou transfix and make it none ?
Its onward force too starkly pent
In figure, bone, and lineament ?
Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,
Talker ! the unreplying Fate ?
Nor see the genius of the whole
Ascendant in the private soul,
Beckon it when to go and come,
Self-announced its hour of doom ?

Fair the soul's recess and shrine,
Magic-built to last a season,
Masterpiece of love benign ;
Fairer that expansive reason,
Whose omen 't is, and sign.
Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know
What rainbows teach, and sunsets show ?
Verdict which accumulates
From lengthening scroll of human fates,
Voice of earth to earth returned,
Prayers of saints that inly burned, —
Saying, *What is excellent,*
As God lives, is permanent ;
Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain ;
Heart's love will meet thee again.
Revere the Maker ; fetch thine eye
Up to his style, and manners of the sky.
Not of adamant and gold
Built he heaven stark and cold ;
No, but a nest of bending reeds,
Flowering grass, and scented weeds ;
Or like a traveller's fleeing tent,
Or bow above the tempest bent ;

Built of tears and sacred flames,
And virtue reaching to its aims ;
Built of furtherance and pursuing,
Not of spent deeds, but of doing.
Silent rushes the swift Lord
Through ruined systems still restored,
Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
Plants with worlds the wilderness ;
Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.
House and tenant go to ground,
Lost in God, in Godhead found.”

THOUGHTS

BESIDE THE CORPSE OF A BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

IMAGE of rest ! how beautiful art thou,
In the fixed quiet of thy marble brow !
All passionless and calm, like wintry skies
In their cold vesture of ethereal dyes,
When stars look downward from their quiet
spheres,
Serenely silent, on a world of tears.

This, this is rest ! The troubled earth hath
naught
To vex thy bosom with an anxious thought ;
No more the pulses of that tranquil heart,
At passion's thrilling voice, shall wildly start ;
Its rudest breath awakes no passing fear,
Nor stirs one blossom on thine early bier.

This, this is peace ! Earth holds not in its sway

One charm the heart's deep sorrows to allay ;
It binds no fetter on the wayward mind,
When swayed by passions, reckless as the wind ;
In all its varied wealth of fruit or flower,
It bears no balm to soothe affliction's hour,
No branch to heal the bitter stream that flows
From life's bright morning to its gloomy close.
But what are earth's dark penalties to thee ?
Thy bonds are riven, and thy soul is free.

Yet would mistaken love have kept thee still,
To drain the bitter cup of mortal ill ;
This heart, still bleeding from the stroke of
Heaven,

Against that awful stroke hath wildly striven,
Hands have been clasped in energetic prayer,
Sighs have been mingled with the viewless air,
Tears have been poured before the throne of God,
Yet bows the soul beneath his chastening rod ;
His will is done ; thou art for ever blest ;
O that this soul could share thy sacred rest !

Still let me gaze upon that placid face,
Where earthly care hath left no sullen trace.
Repose so perfect soothes the bursting heart,
And stills the anguish of affection's smart ;
Ay ! let me gaze ! — How strange that death
should wear
So bright an aspect, such a holy air !
And shall we dread such blessedness as this ?
Such full perfection of ecstatic bliss ?
Stay, spirit ! for around thy placid brow
Methinks I view a halo gathering now ;
Stay till this rebel heart submissive bends,
And frames an anthem as thy soul ascends ;
'T is done ! the cord is loosed that held thee down ;
Go ! to thy blissful home and thornless crown.

THE FLOWER, RAINBOW, BIRD, AND
STAR.

I saw a lovely flower
Upon a slender spray,
But a rude blast came, with sudden power,
And swept its bloom away:
It bent beneath the blow,
And its leaves to earth were given,
But the bitter wind that laid it low
Bore its fragrance unto heaven.

I marked a rainbow's form,
When the summer shower went by,
Born of the sunbeam and the storm,
Spanning the eastern sky :

And I gazed upon the sight,
Till the glorious arch was riven,
And its varied hues of gorgeous light
Melted away in heaven.

I watched a merry bird,
Bulding its fairy, nest,
And the glossy leaves by its wings were stirred,
Round that little spot of rest ;
And I deemed that its gushing song
Would still to mine ear be given,
But it plumed its wing for the skies ere long,
And soared, and sang, in heaven.

I gazed on a gentle star,
That was bright in the evening sky,
And thought how it smiled in its home afar,
When watched by a mortal's eye ;
But the tempest gathered fast,
And wildly the clouds were driven,
And the star was lost, as their dark folds passed,
But I knew it was still in heaven.

So, like that lovely flower,
And like that rainbow's light,
And like the bird of the summer bower,
And the glittering star of night,
Hath thy loved one, in life's pure spring,
From thy fond embraces riven,
Been borne away on an angel's wing,
To dwell in the light of heaven.

CASA WAPPY.*

—

AND hast thou sought thy heavenly home,
Our fond, dear boy, —
The realms where sorrow dare not come,
Where life is joy ?
Pure at thy death as at thy birth,
Thy spirit caught no taint from earth ;
Even by its bliss we mete our death,
Casa Wappy!

Despair was in our last farewell,
As closed thine eye ;
Tears of our anguish may not tell
When thou didst die ;

* Casa Wappy was the self-conferred pet name of an infant son of the poet, snatched away after a very brief illness.

Words may not paint our grief for thee,
Sighs are but bubbles on the sea
Of our unfathomed agony,
Casa Wappy !

Thou wert a vision of delight
To bless us given ;
Beauty embodied to our sight,
A type of heaven :
So dear to us thou wert, thou art
Even less thine own self than a part
Of mine and of thy mother's heart,
Casa Wappy !

Thy bright, brief day knew no decline,
'T was cloudless joy ;
Sunrise and night alone were thine,
Beloved boy !
This morn beheld thee blithe and gay,
That found thee prostrate in decay,
And e'er a third shone, clay was clay,
Casa Wappy !

Gem of our hearth, our household pride,
Earth's undefiled,
Could love have saved, thou hadst not died,
Our dear, sweet child !
Humbly we bow to fate's decree ;
Yet had we hoped that time should see
Thee mourn for us, — not us for thee,
Casa Wappy !

Do what I may, go where I will,
Thou meet'st my sight ;
There dost thou glide before me still, —
A form of light !
I feel thy breath upon my cheek,
I see thee smile, I hear thee speak,
Till, O ! my heart is like to break,
Casa Wappy !

Methinks thou smil'st before me now,
With glance of stealth,
The hair thrown back from thy full brow
In buoyant health :

I see thine eyes' deep violet light,
Thy dimpled cheek carnationed bright,
Thy clasping arms so round and white,
Casa Wappy !

The nursery shows thy pictured wall,
Thy bat, thy bow,
Thy cloak and bonnet, club and ball ;
But where art thou ?
A corner holds thine empty chair,
Thy playthings idly scattered there
But speak to us of our despair,
Casa Wappy !

Even to the last, thy every word —
To glad, to grieve —
Was sweet as sweetest song of bird
On summer's eve :
In outward beauty undecayed,
Death o'er thy spirit cast no shade,
And like the rainbow thou didst fade,
Casa Wappy !

We mourn for thee when blind, blank night
The chamber fills ;
We pine for thee when morn's first light
Reddens the hills :
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sea,
All, to the wall-flower and wild-pea,
Are changed ;— we saw the world through thee,
Casa Wappy !

And though perchance a smile may gleam
Of casual mirth,
It doth not own, whate'er may seem,
An inward birth :
We miss thy small step on the stair ;
We miss thee at thine evening prayer ;
All day we miss thee, everywhere,
Casa Wappy !

Snows muffled earth when thou didst go,
In life's spring bloom,
Down to the appointed house below,
The silent tomb :

But now the green leaves of the tree,
The cuckoo and "the busy bee,"
Return, — but with them bring not thee,
Casa Wappy !

'T is so ; but can it be (while flowers
Revive again)
Man's doom, in death that we and ours
For aye remain ?
O, can it be that o'er the grave
The grass renewed should yearly wave,
Yet God forget our child to save ? —
Casa Wappy !

It cannot be : for were it so
Thus man could die,
Life were a mockery, Thought were woe,
And Truth a lie ;
Heaven were a coinage of the brain,
Religion frenzy, Virtue vain,
And all our hopes to meet again,
Casa Wappy !

Then be to us, O dear, lost child !
With beam of love,
A star, death's uncongenial wild
Smiling above ;
Soon, soon thy little feet have trod
The skyward path, the seraph's road,
That led thee back from man to God,
Casa Wappy !

Yet 't is sweet balm to our despair,
Fond, fairest boy,
That heaven is God's, and thou art there,
With him in joy :
There past are death and all its woes,
There beauty's stream for ever flows,
And pleasure's day no sunset knows,
Casa Wappy !

Farewell, then, — for a while, farewell, —
Pride of my heart !
It cannot be that long we dwell,
Thus torn apart ;

Time's shadows like the shuttle flee,
And, dark howe'er life's night may be,
Beyond the grave I 'll meet with thee,

Casa Wappy !

TO WILLIE IN HEAVEN.
—

Thou cam'st like a dove from the land of the
blest,

To tell us of love in that heaven of rest ;
But the dust of this earth would have sullied thy
wing

If thou longer hadst tarried, thou beautiful thing !

Thou blest little teacher the Father sent forth,
To tell us how simple and plain was the truth,
What a message was thine ! how sublimely 't was
taught !

It came not in language, it uttered no thought.

'T was thy unconscious meekness, thy unshaken
trust,

Thy cherub-like purity dwelling in dust ?

What blessed revealings thou gavest of mind
When simple and child-like to God 't is resigned !

We miss thy bright presence, we pine for thy
smile,
But we know 't is still beaming unseen for a while ;
And when death breaks the fetters and sets the
soul free,
'T will gleam a bright welcome to heaven and
thee.

And thy voice, — how we longed its sweet accents
to hear,
Its infantile prattle, its first “ Mother dear ” ! —
But never, no, never ! for earth 't was not given,
'T was strung and is tuned now a minstrel in
heaven.

Still warble, my cherub, still pour forth thy praise ;
Though I see not, I hear thee, I catch thy sweet
lays,
When my heart will be still, and my spirit away,
And faith bears me on to a glorious day.

THE CHILD'S LAST SLEEP.



Thou sleepest, — but when wilt thou wake, fair
child ? —

When the fawn awakes 'midst the forest wild ?
When the lark's wing mounts with the breeze of
morn,

When the first rich breath of the rose is born ?
Lovely thou sleepest, yet something lies
Too deep and still on thy soft-sealed eyes ;
Mournful, though sweet, is thy rest to see ; —
When will the hour of thy rising be ?

Not when the fawn wakes, not when the lark
On the crimson cloud of the morn floats dark.

Grief with pain-passionate tears hath wet
The hair, shedding gleams from thy pale brow yet ;
Love with sad kisses unfelt hath pressed
Thy meek dropped eyelids and quiet breast ;
And the glad spring, calling out bird and bee,
Shall color all blossoms, fair child, but thee.

Thou 'rt gone from us, bright one ; — that thou
shouldst die,
And life be left to the butterfly !
Thou 'rt gone, as a dew-drop is swept from the
bough ; —
O for the world where thy home is now !
How may we love but in doubt and fear,
How may we anchor our fond hearts here,
How should e'en joy but a trembler be,
Beautiful dust ! when we look on thee ?

'T IS EVER THUS.
—•—

'T is ever thus, 't is ever thus ; when Hope has
built a bower,
Like that of Eden, wreathed about with every
thornless flower,
To dwell therein securely, the self-deceiver's trust,
A whirlwind from the desert comes, and " all is
in the dust."

'T is ever thus, 't is ever thus, that, when the
poor heart clings,
With all its finest tendrils, with all its flexible rings,
That goodly thing it cleaveth to, so fondly and so
fast,
Is struck to earth by lightning, or scattered by
the blast.

'T is ever thus, 't is ever thus, with beams of
mortal bliss,
With looks too bright and beautiful for such a
world as this ;
One moment round about us their angel lightnings
play,
Then down the veil of darkness drops, and all has
passed away.

'T is ever thus, 't is ever thus, with sounds too
sweet for earth,
Seraphic sounds, that float away, borne heaven-
ward in their birth :
The golden shell is broken, the silver chord is
mute,
The sweet bells are all silent, and hushed the
lovely lute.

'T is ever thus, 't is ever thus, with all that 's best
below ;
The dearest, noblest, loveliest, are always first
to go ;—

The bird that sings the sweetest ; the vine that
crowns the rock,

The glory of the garden ; "the flower of the
flock."

'T is ever thus, 't is ever thus, with creatures
heavenly fair,

Too finely framed to bide the brunt more earthly
natures bear,

A little while they dwell with us, blest ministers
of love ;

Then spread the wings we had not seen, and seek
their home above.

WEE WILLIE.



FARE thee well, our last and fairest,
Dear wee Willie, fare thee well !
He who lent thee hath recalled thee,
Back with him and his to dwell.
Fifteen moons their silver lustre
Only o'er thy brow had shed,
When thy spirit joined the seraphs,
And thy dust the dead.

Like a sunbeam, through our dwelling
Shone thy presence bright and calm !
Thou didst add a zest of pleasure ;
To our sorrows thou wert balm ; —

Brighter beamed thine eyes than summer ;
And thy first attempt at speech
Thrilled our heart-strings with a rapture
Music ne'er could reach.

As we gazed upon thee sleeping,
With thy fine, fair locks outspread,
Thou didst seem a little angel,
Who from heaven to earth had strayed ;
And, entranced, we watched the vision,
Half in hope and half affright,
Lest what we deemed ours, and earthly,
Should dissolve in light.

Snows o'ermantled hill and valley,
Sullen clouds bedimmed the sky,
When the first drear doubt oppressed us,
That our child was doomed to die.
Through each long night-watch, the taper
Showed the hectic of thy cheek,
And each anxious dawn beheld thee
More worn out and weak.

'T was even then Destruction's angel
Shook his pinions o'er our path,
Seized the rosiest of our household,
And struck Charlie down in death, —
Fearful, awful, Desolation
On our lintel set his sign ;
And we turned from his sad death-bed,'
Willie, round to thine !

As the beams of spring's first morning
Through the silent chamber played,
Lifeless, in mine arms I raised thee,
And in thy small coffin laid ;
Ere the day-star with the darkness
Nine times had triumphant striven,
In one grave had met your ashes,
And your souls in heaven !

Five were ye, the beauteous blossoms
Of our hopes, and hearts, and hearth ;
Two asleep lie buried under,
Three for us yet gladden earth :

Thee, our Hyacinth, gay Charlie,
Willie, thee our snowdrop pure,
Back to us shall second spring-time
Never more allure !

Yet while thinking, O our lost ones,
Of how dear ye were to us,
Why should dreams of doubt and darkness
Haunt our troubled spirits thus ?
Why across the cold, dim church-yard
Flit our visions of despair ?
Seated on the tomb, Faith's angel
Says, " Ye are not there ! "

Where, then, are ye ? With the Saviour
Blest, for ever blest, are ye,
'Mid the sinless little children,
Who have heard his " Come to me ! "
'Yond the shades of death's dark valley,
Now ye lean upon his breast,
Where the wicked dare not enter,
And the weary rest !

We are wicked, we are weary, —
For us pray, and for us plead ;
God, who ever hears the sinless,
May through you the sinful heed ;
Pray that, through Christ's mediation,
All our faults may be forgiven ;
Plead that ye be sent to greet us
At the gates of heaven !

STAND BACK ! UNCOVERED STAND !

**STAND back ! uncovered stand ! for, lo !
The parents that have lost their child
Bow to the majesty of woe.**

He came, a herald from above ;
 Pure from his God he came to them,
Teaching new duties, deeper love ;
 And, like the child of Bethlehem,
He grew in stature and in grace.
From the sweet spirit of his face
They learnt a new, more heavenly joy,
And were the better for their boy.

But God hath taken whom he gave,
 Recalled the messenger he sent ;

And now beside the infant's grave
The spirit of the strong is bent.

But though the tears must flow, the heart
Ache with its vacant, strange distress,
Ye did not from your infant part
. When his clear eye grew meaningless.
That eye is beaming still ; and still
Upon his Father's errand, he —
Your own dear, bright, unearthly boy —
Worketh the kind, mysterious will ;
And from this fount of bitter grief
Will bring a stream of joy.
O, may this be your faith, and your relief !

Then will the world be full of him ; the sky,
With all its placid myriads, to your eye
Will tell of him ; the wind will breathe his tone ;
And slumbering in the midnight, they alone,
Your Father and your child, will hover nigh.
Believe in him, behold him everywhere,
And sin will die within you ; earthly care

78 **STAND BACK ! UNCOVERED STAND !**

Fall to its earth ; and heavenward, side by side,
Ye shall go up, your infant for your guide.
Ye shall go up, beyond this realm of storms,
Quick, and more quick ; till welcomed there
above,
His voice shall bid ye, in the might of love,
Lay down these weeds of earth, and wear your
native forms.

BEHOLD THE GLORIOUS MORN !

BEHOLD the glorious morn ! And where art thou,
To feel its first rich breath on thy sweet brow,
 Child of our hope and love,
And stand, with the spring-flowers about thee waking,
And catch the early music that is breaking
 From valley and fresh grove ?

Were these to thee a weariness, — the birds,
And the bright waters, and the earnest words
 Of strong affection shed, —
A mother's love, whose holy influence fell,
In its deep truth and its unchanging spell,
 Like light upon thy head ?

Young spirit ! had the sound no joy for thee,
That in the dust this hour thy form should be,
And mute thy blessed voice ?
O, there be yearnings for thee, gentlest one !
Gone with thy grace and thy sweet laughter's tone.

Meet were thy footsteps for the world of flowers,
And thy lost beauty for the coming hours
Of the crowned summer's rain ;
And thou within the silent grave art laid,
And melody of bird and breeze is made
Henceforth to thee in vain.

And there are dancing o'er the joyous earth
Light-hearted children in their joyous mirth ;
And they remember not
The clasping of thy gentle hand, thou child,
The spirit beautiful and undefiled,
Now parted from their lot.

But I will speak of thee at eventide,
When, in their watchfulness, the pure stars glide
Above thy narrow bed,

And when, alas ! shall come the morning's gleam,
Bringing all beauty unto leaf and stream,
 Yet reaching not the dead.

I will remember, and the dream shall be
For evermore a welcome thing to me,
 Child of my bosom's love ;
And I will deem thou 'rt standing even now,
With the hair parted on thy sinless brow,
 In a bright world above.

FAIR SLEEPER, REST IN PEACE !

“Thou sleepest, but we will not regret thee.”

FAIR sleeper, rest in peace !
We cannot wish thee back, for a sweet voice
Whispers unto us, bidding us rejoice
That thou art now at ease
From pain, walking the golden streets above,
Where sun and moon is Christ’s eternal love.

E’en when Death — terror’s king —
Came to conduct the *mortal* to its rest
Within its mother earth’s cold, silent breast,
The radiance of his wing
Threw beams of light upon thy pallid face,
That lit thy soul to its abiding-place.

The weight of many years
Was not upon thee ; — thou wert called away
From us in the bright morning of thy day.

Life's burdens and its fears
Had not pressed heavily on thy young heart
Ere came thine early summons to depart.

Earth had no charms for thee
Compared with the full glories round thee now, —
The sweet-toned harps, the crown upon thy brow,
And the grand minstrelsy
Of cherubim and seraphim before
The throne of Him the heavenly hosts adore.

High heaven is now thine own ;
Though we are heavy-hearted, and the tear
Will gush out as we vainly list to hear
The wonted gentle tone
That fell upon the glad ear from a tongue
Now warbling praise the heavenly choirs among.

O, when a few more days
Have hurried by, they who lament thy loss
Will find that earth's best treasures are but dross

84 FAIR SLEEPER, REST IN PEACE !

Beside the glowing rays
Of glory kindled round his brow who trod
The path thy spirit found that leads to God.

Loved sleeper, fare thee well !
We will not wish thee back, but lift the prayer
In fervency, that we may meet thee there
Where thou hast gone to dwell ;—
The prayer, that with us, as with thee, the even
Of life may be the entrance home to heaven.

THE DYING CHILD.



'T is dying ! life is yielding place
To that mysterious charm,
Which spreads upon the troubled face
A fixed, unchanging calm,
That deepens as the parting breath
Is gently sinking into death.

A thoughtful beauty rests the while
Upon its snowy brow ;
But those pale lips could never smile
More radiantly than now ;
And sure some heavenly dreams begin
To dawn upon the soul within !

O that those mildly conscious lips
Were parted to reply, —
To tell how death's severe eclipse
Is passing from thine eye !
For living eye can never see
The change that death hath wrought in thee.

Perhaps thy sight is wandering far
Throughout the kindled sky,
In tracing every infant star
Amid the lights on high, —
Souls of the just, whose path is bent
Around the glorious firmament.

Perhaps thine eye is gazing down
Upon the earth below,
Rejoicing to have gained thy crown,
And hurried from its woe,
To dwell beneath the throne of Him,
Before whose glory heaven is dim.

Thy life, — how cold it might have been
If days had grown to years !

How dark, how deeply stained with sin,
With weariness and tears !
How happy thus to sink to rest,
So early numbered with the blest !

'T is well, then, that the smile should lie
Upon thy marble cheek ;
It tells to our inquiring eye
What words could never speak, —
A revelation sweetly given
Of all that man can learn of heaven.

THE VIRGIN AND THE CHILD.



AMONG green, pleasant meadows,
All in a grove so wild,
Was set a marble image
Of the Virgin and the child.

There, oft, on summer evenings,
A lovely boy would rove,
To play beside the image
That sanctified the grove.

Oft sat his mother by him,
Among the shadows dim,
And told how the Lord Jesus
Was once a child like him.

“ And now from highest heaven
He doth look down each day,
And sees whate’er thou doest,
And hears what thou dost say.”

Thus spake his tender mother :
And on an evening bright,
When the red, round sun descended
'Mid clouds of crimson light,

Again the boy was playing,
And earnestly said he,
“ O beautiful Lord Jesus,
Come down and play with me !

“ I will find thee flowers the fairest,
And weave for thee a crown ;
I will get thee ripe, red strawberries,
If thou wilt but come down !

“ O holy, holy Mother,
Put him down from off thy knee !
For in these silent meadows
There are none to play with me.”

Thus spake the boy so lonely,
The while his mother heard,
But on his prayer she pondered,
And spake to him no word.

That selfsame night she dreamed
A lovely dream of joy,
She thought she saw young Jesus
There, playing with her boy.

“ And for the fruits and flowers
Which thou hast brought to me,
Rich blessings shall be given
A thousand fold to thee.

“ For in the fields of heaven
Thou shalt roam with me at will,
And of bright fruits celestial
Shalt have, dear child, thy fill.”

Thus tenderly and kindly
The fair child Jesus spoke,
And, full of careful musings,
The anxious mother woke.

And thus it was accomplished,
In one short month and day,
That lovely boy, so gentle,
Upon his death-bed lay.

And thus he spake in dying :
“ O mother dear, I see
The beautiful child Jesus
A coming down to me !

“ And in his hand he beareth
Bright flowers as white as snow,
And red and juicy strawberries,—
Dear mother, let me go ! ”

He *died*, — but that fond mother
Her sorrow did restrain,
For she knew he was with Jesus,
And she asked him not again !

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS.



THE melancholy days are come, the saddest of
the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows
brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered
leaves lie dead :
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's
tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the
shrub the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow, through all
the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers,
 that lately sprung and stood,
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sis-
 terhood ?
Alas ! they all are in their graves, the gentle race
 of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and
 good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie ; but the cold
 November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely
 ones again.

The windflower and the violet, they perished
 long ago,
And the wild-rose and the orchis died amid the
 summer glow ;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in
 the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook, in autumn
 beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear, cold heaven, as
 falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from
 upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as still
such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their
winter home,
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though
all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the
rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose
fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the
stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful
beauty died,
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded
by my side :
In the cold, moist earth we laid her when the
forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life
so brief ;
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young
friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the
flowers.

THE MISSION OF THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

“ Go forth,” said the Heavenly Father,
To one of his seraph train ;
“ Go forth on an errand of mercy
To the world of trouble and pain,

“ And away from earth’s noxious vapours
Some buds of beauty bring,
To bloom in the heavenly gardens,
’Neath the smiles of perpetual spring.”

And the angel, with wing resplendent,
Went out from the heavenly band,
'Midst a chorus of joyful voices,
Resounding at God’s right hand.

Slowly night's gathering shadows
Closed round a mother mild,
Who, tearful and heavy-hearted,
Watched by her dying child.

Fevered, and restless, and moaning,
On his little bed he lay,
When the bright-winged angel drew near him,
And kissed his last breath away.

So softly the chain was severed, —
So gently was stayed the breath, —
It soothed the heart of the mourner,
And she blest the Angel of Death.

For she knew that the soul of her darling
Had gone to his Father above, —
Clasped in the arms more tender
Than even her fondest love.

THRENODIA.



GONE, gone from us ! and shall we see
Those sibyl leaves of destiny,
Those calm eyes, nevermore, —
Those deep, dark eyes so warm and bright,
Wherein the fortunes of the man
Lay slumbering in prophetic light,
In characters a child might scan ?
So bright, and gone forth utterly !
O stern word, — Nevermore !

The stars of those two gentle eyes
Will shine no more on earth :
Quenched are the hopes that had their birth,
As we watched them slowly rise,
Stars of a mother's fate ;

And she would read them o'er and o'er,
Pondering, as she sate,
Over their dear astrology,
Which she had conned and conned before,
Deeming she needs must read aright
What was writ so passing bright,
And yet, alas ! she knew not why
Her voice would falter in its song,
And tears would slide from out her eye,
Silent, — as they were doing wrong.
Her heart was like a windflower, bent
Even to breaking with the balmy dew,
Turning its heavenly nourishment
(That filled with tears its eyes of blue,
Like a sweet suppliant that weeps in prayer,
Making her innocence show more fair,
Albeit unwitting of the ornament)
Into a load too great for it to bear.
O stern word, — Nevermore !

The tongue that scarce had learned to claim
An entrance to a mother's heart
By that dear talisman, a mother's name,
Sleeps all forgetful of its art.

I loved to see the infant soul
(How mighty in the weakness
Of its untutored meekness !)
Peep timidly from out its nest,
His lips, the while,
Fluttering with half-fledged words,
Or hushing to a smile
That more than words expressed,
When his glad mother on him stole,
And snatched him to her breast !
O, thoughts were brooding in those eyes,
That would have soared, like strong-winged birds,
Far, far into the skies,
Gladdening the earth with song
And gushing harmonies,
Had he but tarried with us long !
O stern word, — Nevermore !

How peacefully they rest,
Cross-folded there
Upon his little breast,
Those small, white hands that ne'er were still before,
But ever sported with his mother's hair,
Or the plain cross that on her breast she wore !

Her heart no more will beat
To feel the touch of that soft palm,
That ever seemed a new surprise,
Sending glad thoughts up to her eyes
To bless him with their holy calm, —
Sweet thoughts, they made her eyes as sweet.
How quiet are the hands
That wove those pleasant bands !
But that they do not rise and sink
With his calm breathing, I should think
That he were dropped asleep.
Alas ! too deep, too deep
Is this his slumber !
Time scarce can number
The years e'er he will wake again.
O, may we see his eyelids open then !
O stern word, — Nevermore !

As the airy gossamere,
Floating in the sunlight clear,
Where'er it toucheth clinging tightly,
Round glossy leaf or stump unsightly,
So from his spirit wandered out
Tendrils, spreading all about,

Knitting all things to its thrall
With a perfect love to all.
O stern word, — Nevermore !

He did float a little way
A down the stream of time,
With dreamy eyes watching the ripples play,
Or listening their fairy chime ;
His slender sail
Ne'er felt the gale ;
He did but float a little way,
And, putting to the shore
While yet 'twas early day,
Went calmly on his way
To dwell with us no more.
No jarring did he feel,
No grating on his vessel's keel :
A strip of silver sand
Mingled the waters with the land
Where he was seen no more !
O stern word, — Nevermore !

Full short his journey was ; no dust
Of earth unto his sandals clave ;

The weary weight that old men must,
He bore not to his grave.
He seemed a cherub who had lost his way
And wandered hither, so his stay
With us was short, and 't was most meet
That he should be no delver in earth's clod,
Nor need to pause and cleanse his feet
To stand before his God !
O blest word, — Evermore !

“SHE IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH.”



SHE is not dead, but sleepeth.

Why in your hearts this strife ?

He who hath kept still keepeth.

The never-dying life.

And though that form must moulder

And mix again with earth,

In faith ye may behold her

In glory going forth.

For what to us seems dying

Is but a second birth,

A spirit upward flying

From the broken shell of earth.

104 "SHE IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH."

We are the dead, the buried,
We who do yet survive,
In sin and sense interred ;
The dead, — they are alive.

Freed from this earthly prison,
They seek another sphere.
They are not dead, but risen ;
And God is with them there.

THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD.



FORGET them not ! though now their name
Be but a mournful sound,
Though by the hearth its utterance claim
A stillness round, —

Though for their sake this earth no more
As it hath been may be,
And shadows, never marked before,
Brood o'er each tree, —

And though their image dim the sky,
Yet, yet, forget them not !
Nor, when their love and life went by,
Forsake the spot !

They have a breathing influence there,
A charm not elsewhere found ;
Sad, — yet it sanctifies the air,
The stream, the ground.

Then, though the wind an altered tone
Through the young foliage bear,
Though every flower of something gone
A tinge may wear, —

O, fly it not ! No *fruitless* grief,
Thus in their presence felt,
A record links to every leaf,
There, where they dwelt.

Still trace the path which knew their tread,
Still tend their garden bower,
Still commune with the holy dead,
In each lone hour.

The *holy* dead ! — O, blest we are,
That we may call them so,
And to their image look afar,
Through all our woe !

Blest that the things they loved on earth
As relics we may hold,
That wake sweet thoughts of parted worth,
By springs untold !

Blest that a deep and chastening power
Thus to our souls is given,
If but to bird, or song, or flower,
Yet all for Heaven.

THE SICKLY BABE.



MINE infant was a poor, weak thing,
No strength those little arms to fling,
His cheek was pale and very thin,
And none a smile from him could win
Save I, — his mother ! O my child,
How could they think my love so wild ?

I never said it, but I knew,
From the first breath my baby drew,
That I must soon my joy resign, —
That he was God's, not mine, not mine !
But think you that I loved him less
Because I saw his feebleness ?

To others senseless seemed his eye ;
They looked, and only thought, “ He 'll die ” ;
To me that little suffering frame
Came freighted with a spirit's claim, —
Came full of blessings to my heart, —
Brought thoughts I could to none impart.

The pale, pale bud bloomed not on earth ;
Blighted and stricken from his birth,
A few short months upon my breast
He lay, then smiled and went to rest :
And all forgot him, born to die,
All, all forgot, — save God and I.

LITTLE NELLY'S FUNERAL.

—
AND now the bell — the bell
She had so often heard by night and day,
And listened to with solemn pleasure,
E'en as a living voice —
Rung its remorseless toll for her,
So young, so beautiful, so good.

Decrepit age, and vigorous life,
And blooming youth, and helpless infancy,
Poured forth, on crutches, in the pride of strength
And health, in the full blush
Of promise, the mere dawn of life,
To gather round her tomb. Old men were there

Whose eyes were dim
And senses failing,—

Grandames, who might have died ten years ago,
And still been old,—the deaf, the blind, the lame,
The palsied,

The living-dead in many shapes and forms,
To see the closing of this early grave.

What was the death it would shut in,
To that which still could crawl and creep above it !

Along the crowded path they bore her now,
Pure as the new-fallen snow
That covered it, whose day on earth
Had been as fleeting.

Under that porch, where she had sat when Heaven
In mercy brought her to that peaceful spot,
She passed again, and the old church
Received her in its quiet shade.

O, it is hard to take to heart
The lesson that such deaths will teach !
But let no man reject it,
For it is one that all must learn,
And is a mighty, universal truth.

When death strikes down the innocent and young,
For every fragile form from which he lets
 The parting spirit free,
 A hundred virtues rise,
In shapes of mercy, charity, and love,
 To walk the world and bless it:
 Of every tear
That sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves,
Some good is born, some gentler nature comes.

TO A DYING INFANT.



SLEEP, little baby ! sleep !
Not in thy cradle-bed,
Not on thy mother's breast,
Henceforth shall be thy rest,
But with the quiet dead.

Yes, — with the quiet dead,
Baby, thy rest shall be.
O, many a weary heart,
Weary of life's dull part,
Would fain lie down with thee !

Flee, little tender nursling !
Flee to thy grassy nest ;
There the first flowers shall blow,
The first pure flakes of snow
Shall fall upon thy breast.

Peace ! Peace ! The little bosom
Labors with shortening breath.
Peace ! Peace ! That tremulous sigh
Speaks his departure nigh, —
Those are the damps of death.

I 've seen thee in thy beauty,
A thing all life and glee ;
But never then wert thou
So beautiful as now,
Baby, thou seem'st to me, —

Thine upturned eyes glazed over,
Like harebells wet with dew,
Already veiled and hid,
By the convulsed lid,
Their pupils darkly blue, —

The little mouth half open,
The soft lip quivering,
As if (like summer air
Ruffling the rose-leaves) there
Thy soul were fluttering.

Mount up, immortal essence !
Young spirit ! haste, depart !
And is this Death ! — Dread thing !
If such thy visiting
How beautiful thou art !

O, I could gaze for ever
Upon that waxen face,
So passionless ! so pure !
The little shrine was sure
An angel's dwelling-place.

Thou weepest, childless mother !
Ay, weep ! — 't will ease thine heart ;
He was thy first-born son,
Thy first, thine only one, —
'T is hard from him to part.

'T is hard to lay thy darling
Deep in the damp, cold earth, —
His empty crib to see,
His silent nursery,
Once gladsome with his mirth.

To meet again in slumber
His small mouth's rosy kiss,
Then — (wakened with a start
By thine own throbbing heart) —
His twining arms to miss !

To feel (half-conscious why)
A dull, heart-sinking weight,
Till memory on thy soul
Flashes the painful whole,
That thou art desolate !

And then to lie and weep,
And think the livelong night
(Feeding thine own distress
With accurate greediness)
Of every past delight ; —

Of all his winning ways,
His pretty, playful smiles,
His joy at sight of thee,
His tricks, his mimicry,
And all his little wiles !

O, these are recollections
Round mothers' hearts that cling, —
That mingle with the tears
And smiles of after years,
With oft awakening !

But thou wilt then, fond mother,
In after years, look back,
(Time brings such wondrous easing,)
With sadness not unpleasing,
E'en on this gloomy track.

Thou 'lt say, — “ My pride ! my blessing !
It almost broke my heart
When thou wert forced to go,
And yet, for thee, I know
'T was better to depart.

“ God took thee in his mercy,
A lamb untasked, untried ;
He fought the fight for thee,
He won the victory,
And thou art sanctified !

“ I look around and see
The evil ways of men ;
And, O beloved child !
I 'm more than reconciled
To thy departure then.

“ The little arms that clasped me, —
The innocent lips that pressed, —
Would they have been as pure
Till now, as when of yore
I lulled thee on my breast ?

“ Now (like a dew-drop shrined
Within a crystal stone)
Thou 'rt safe in heaven, my dove !
Safe with the Source of Love,
The Everlasting One.

“And when the hour arrives
From flesh that sets me free,
Thy spirit may await,
The first at heaven’s gate
To meet and welcome me.”

THE YOUNGEST.



I ROCKED her in her cradle,
And laid her in the tomb. She was the *youngest* ;
What fireside circle hath not felt the charm
Of that sweet tie ? The youngest ne'er grew old.
The fond endearment of our earlier days
We keep alive in them, and when they die,
Our youthful joys we bury with them.

THE SPIRIT'S WHISPER.

"Dost thou catch
 The gentle whisper of that angel voice?"
 "Unto mine ear
 There comes a strain, like music heard in dreams."

SWEET mother, do not weep !
 The joy of sainted spirits now is mine ;
 I roam the fields of light, with those who keep
 Bright watch, where heaven's own golden portals
 shine.

I am the babe no more,
 Who gave its feeble wailing to thine ear ;
 Free from the cumbering clay, I mount, I soar,
 Upward and onward, through a boundless sphere.

O, couldst thou know how fair,
How full of blessedness, this better land,
Thou wouldest rejoice thy child in safety, there
Had place for ever 'mid the angel band.

I may not tell thee all
Its light and loveliness ; its hymns of joy
Upon a mortal ear may never fall,
And tongues immortal can alone employ :

But, O, 't is sweet to be
A sinless dweller 'mid its radiant bowers !
To join its seraph-songs of harmony,—
To breathe the incense of its fadeless flowers, —

To dwell no more with pain,—
To shed no tears, — to feel no panting breath.
Sweet mother, do not grieve for me again,
I am so blessed ; I bless the hand of death.

Turn with unwavering trust
From the green earth-bed, where my body lies ;
Thou didst but lay its covering in the dust,
Thy child yet lives, will live, beyond the skies.

There we shall meet again :
O, yes ! sweet mother, meet to part no more !
I 'll welcome thee with heaven's angelic train,
And lead thee to the Saviour we adore.

WE WATCHED HER BREATHING.

“She sleeps;
Her smile hath passed away,
As dies a ripple on the sea.”

WE watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As on her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her being out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied ;
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came, dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed ; — she had
Another morn than ours.

SONNET.

TO A CHILD.

How oft, fair form, when we have bent above
Thy slumbering loveliness to catch the breath
So soft that scarce the down-flake it might move
Loosed from the gentle bosom of a dove,
And sweet as a flower's sweet heart uttereth,
But for those strange, faint smiles, whose fitful
beams
Played, as we gazed, across thy infant dreams,
When angels whispered thee, it seemed like
death,
While now thy death a gentlest slumber seems !

Yet were it sin that grief our hearts should wring,
That they have come, so soon, alas ! to bring,
 Those whispering angels, back to heaven again
 Thy spirit's sinless innocence, ere stain
Of earth one shade could cast upon its sunny wing.

THE THREE SONS.

I HAVE a son, a little son, a boy just five years old,
With eyes of thoughtful earnestness, and mind of gentle mould.
They tell me that unusual grace in all his ways appears,—
That my child is grave and wise of heart beyond his childish years.
I cannot say how this may be, I know his face is fair,
And yet his chiefest comeliness is his sweet and serious air :

I know his heart is kind and fond, I know he
loveth me,
But loveth yet his mother more, with grateful
fervency.
But that which others most admire is the thought
which fills his mind,
The food for grave, inquiring speech he every-
where doth find.
Strange questions doth he ask of me, when we
together walk ;
He scarcely thinks as children think, or talks as
children talk.
Nor cares he much for childish sports, dotes not
on bat or ball,
But looks on manhood's ways and works, and apt-
ly mimics all.
His little heart is busy still, and oftentimes per-
plexed,
With thoughts about this world of ours, and
thoughts about the next ;
He kneels at his dear mother's knee, she teacheth
him to pray,
And strange, and sweet, and solemn then are the
words which he will say.

O, should my gentle child be spared to manhood's
years, like me,
A holier and a wiser man I trust that he will
be ;
And when I look into his eyes, and stroke his
thoughtful brow,
I dare not think what I should feel were I to lose
him now.

I have a son, a second son, a simple child of
three ;
I 'll not declare how bright and fair his little
features be,
How silver sweet those tones of his when he prat-
tles on my knee :
I do not think his light blue eye is, like his broth-
er's, keen,
Nor his brow so full of childish thought as his
hath ever been ;
But his little heart 's a fountain pure of kind and
tender feeling,
And his every look 's a gleam of light, rich depths
of love revealing.

When he walks with me, the country folk who
pass us in the street

Will shout for joy, and bless my boy, he looks so
mild and sweet.

A playfellow is he to all, and yet, with cheerful tone,
Will sing his little song of love, when left to sport
alone.

His presence is like sunshine sent to gladden
home and hearth,

To comfort us in all our griefs, and sweeten all
our mirth.

Should *he* grow up to riper years, God grant his
heart may prove

As sweet a home for heavenly grace as now for
earthly love :

And if, beside his grave, the tears our aching eyes
must dim,

God comfort us for all the love which we shall
lose in him.

I have a son, a third sweet son ; his age I can-
not tell,

For they reckon not by years and months where
he has gone to dwell.

To us for fourteen anxious months his infant
smiles were given,

And then he bade farewell to earth, and went to
live in heaven.

I cannot tell what form is his, what looks he
weareth now,

Nor guess how bright a glory crowns his shining
seraph brow.

The thoughts that fill his sinless soul, the bliss
which he doth feel,

Are numbered with the secret things which God
will not reveal.

But I know (for God hath told me this) that he is
now at rest,

Where other blessed infants be, on their Saviour's
loving breast.

I know his spirit feels no more this weary load of
flesh,

But his sleep is blessed with endless dreams of joy
for ever fresh.

I know the angels fold him close beneath their
glittering wings,

And soothe him with a song that breathes of
heaven's divinest things.

I know that we shall meet our babe, (his mother
dear and I,)
Where God for aye shall wipe away all tears
from every eye.
Whate'er befalls his brethren twain, *his* bliss can
never cease ;
Their lot may here be grief and fear, but *his* is
certain peace.
It may be that the tempter's wiles their souls from
bliss may sever,
But, if our own poor faith fail not, *he* must be
ours for ever.
When we think of what our darling is, and what
we still must be, —
When we muse on *that* world's perfect bliss, and
this world's misery, —
When we groan beneath this load of sin, and feel
this grief and pain, —
O ! we 'd rather lose our other two, than have
him here again.

THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

THEY grew in beauty, side by side,
They filled our home with glee ; —
Their graves are severed far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair, sleeping brow ;
She had each folded flower in sight ; —
Where are those dreamers now ?

They have passed, — they have passed away, who
played
Beneath the same green tree ;
Whose voices mingled as they prayed
Around one parent knee.

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheered with song the hearth, —
Alas for love, if *thou* wert all,
And naught beyond, O earth !

THE INVOCATION.

ANSWER me, burning stars of night !
Where is the spirit gone,
That, past the reach of human sight,
Even as a breeze, hath flown ?
And the stars answered me, — “ We roll
In light and power on high,
But of the never-dying soul
Ask things that cannot die ! ”

O many-toned and chainless wind !
Thou art a wanderer free ;
Tell me if *thou* its place canst find,
Far over mount and sea.

And the wind murmured in reply,
“ The blue deep I have crossed,
And met its barks and billows high,
But not what thou hast lost ! ”

Ye clouds, that gorgeously repose
Around the setting sun,
Answer ! have ye a home for those
Whose earthly race is run ?
The bright clouds answered, — “ We depart,
We vanish from the sky ;
Ask what is deathless in thy heart
For that which cannot die ! ”

Speak, then, thou voice of God within, —
Thou of the deep, low tone !
Answer me, through life’s restless din,
Where is the spirit flown ?
And the voice answered, — “ Be thou still ;
Enough to know is given ;
Clouds, winds, and stars *their* tasks fulfil,
Thine is to trust in Heaven ! ”

THE CHILD AND THE MOURNER.

A LITTLE child beneath a tree
Sat and chanted cheerily
A little song, a pleasant song,
Which was, — she sang it all day long, —
“ When the wind blows, the blossoms fall ;
But a good God reigns over all.”

There passed a lady by the way,
Moaning in the face of day :
There were tears upon her cheek,
Grief in her heart too great to speak ;
She stopped and listened to the child
That looked to heaven, and, singing, smiled ;

For she but a few sad days before
Had lost the little babe she bore ;
And grief was heavy at her soul
As that sweet memory o'er her stole,
And showed how bright had been the Past,
The Present drear and overcast.

And as she listened to the song,
Silver-toned, and sweet, and strong,
Which that child, the livelong day,
Chanted to itself in play, —
“ When the wind blows, the blossoms fall,
But a good God reigns over all,” —

The mother's lips impulsive moved ;
The mother's grief, though unreproved,
Softened, as her trembling tongue
Repeated what the infant sung.
And though the child — if child it were,
And not a seraph sitting there —
Was seen no more, the sorrowing one
Went on her way resignedly,
The song still ringing in her ears ; —
Was it music of the spheres ?

Who shall tell ? She did not know.
But in the midst of deepest woe,
The strain recurred when sorrow grew,
To warn her, and console her too :—
“ When the wind blows, the blossoms fall ;
But a good God reigns over all.”

RESIGNATION.



THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
 But one dead lamb is there !
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
 But has one vacant chair !

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
 And mournings for the dead ;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
 Will not be comforted !

Let us be patient ! These severe afflictions
 Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
 Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors ;
Amid these earthly damps
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death ! What seems so is transition ;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead, — the child of our affection, —
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air ;

Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her ;
For when, with raptures wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child ;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace ;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times, impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves, moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest, —

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We cannot wholly stay ;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

THE END.





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